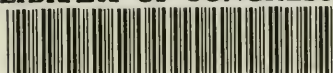


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THE SON *of a* MILLIONIAIRE

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

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GEORGE L. RAYMOND,
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March 1

March 33

Characters

BERT VANWORTH—The Son of a Millionaire.

HUGH WRIGHT—The Son of a College Professor, Brother of Ida Wright.

PETE BENNETT—A Student working his way through College.

DAN STRONG } College Students.
BEN WYLIE }

DR. CATOR—Family Physician of the VanWorths.

DR. MONEY—Treasurer of the College.

IDA WRIGHT—The Daughter of a College Professor, Sister of Hugh.

MRS. VANWORTH—Wife of a Millionaire, Mother of Bert.

Other College Students and Expressmen.

Argument

ACT I.—The widow of a millionaire, Mrs. VanWorth, by an offer of money, induces a College Treasurer and Hugh, the son of a professor, to allow her own son, a Freshman, Bert, to occupy, in a college dormitory, an exceptionally comfortable room reserved by rule for upper-classmen. Ida, Hugh's sister, anticipating hazing in the circumstances, opposes the arrangement. This awakens Mrs. VanWorth's enmity, to which she is heard giving expression. Certain students, resenting the fact of such a room's being occupied by a Freshman, as well as the dislike expressed for Ida, dress like fashionable young ladies and induce Mrs. VanWorth to invite them, apparently so much more ladylike than Ida, to her home. Mrs. VanWorth and Bert are astonished to find that vulgar students have dared to make fools of them.

ACT II.—Bert's mother and his family's connections have gotten him into a dissipated college fraternity. On account of his associates, Ida's father will not let her ride in Bert's automobile, and a brainy, literary society that he, as a brainy man, is anxious to join, rather than appear to bootlick a millionaire, picks quarrels with him, humiliates him, and rejects him.

ACT III.—In spite of Bert's wish to conceal the facts, it is found out that he has paid off a large debt of the athletic association; has given a poor student who had lost his situation enough to enable him and his sister to continue their education; and has proposed to his mother to pay a salary that will keep the father of his best friend from losing his professorship. These acts are attributed to a desire, on his part, to obtain college popularity, offices, and honors through bribery, and even through pandering to the meanest of motives. Meantime Ida, though believing in Bert, is so insulted by Mrs. VanWorth's superciliousness as to feel obliged to repel Bert's attentions to herself.

ACT IV.—Mrs. VanWorth tries in vain to obtain from the Doctor a certificate that Bert, though of legal age, is not competent to control the disposal of his own property. The reason is that he, while keeping enough for all rational purposes, has determined to give away what is not needed, as, *e. g.*, one large estate for a Junior Republic, two sums endowing professorships, one of them for himself and one for Hugh's father. No longer a millionaire, he has been elected, on his own merits, to be a professor in the college. Before he enters upon his work he is to spend two years in Europe. Feeling now on the same social level as Ida, he invites her to spend these years with him, and then to return and spend the rest of her life with him in her old college home. She accepts.

The Son of a Millionaire

ACT I.

AS A FRESHMAN IN COLLEGE.

SCENE: *The stage, which remains unchanged throughout the play, represents a conventional room in a College Dormitory. At the back center are a mantelpiece and fireplace, by the side of which is a stand containing a shovel and tongs. On either side of the mantelpiece, to the Right and Left, are windows. Beside them are small book cases, and under them seats filled with sofa cushions. On the walls hang pictures, college flags, foils and at least two pairs of boxing gloves. In the room is a table on which are books, paper, pens, ink, cigars and a match-box. Around the table are chairs. Entrances by doors at the Right Second and Right Upper, and Left Second and Left Upper. All the doors except at Left Second stand open. Throughout the play, all the men wear or carry caps or hats when they enter the room at the Left Second or when they leave by that entrance; and all the women are in outdoor costume. The curtain rising reveals DAN, PETE, BEN and OTHER STUDENTS, all with caps in their hands, singing College Songs.*

DAN (*putting on his cap and moving toward the Left Second*). No prospect of Hugh's, being here just yet! I move to adjourn.

Exit—Left Second—DAN, PETE, BEN and the OTHER STUDENTS.

Enter—Left Second—MR. MONEY. He stands holding the door open.

Enter—Left Second—MRS. VANWORTH, DR. CATOR and BERT VANWORTH.

MRS. VANWORTH (*speaking to the DOCTOR*). It was very kind of you to come down and introduce us here, Doctor. Your Alma Mater certainly seems the very place for Bertie. But the dormitory arrangements appear so primitive and uncomfortable! (*Speaking to MR. MONEY and looking around*). Is this a student's room?

MR. MONEY. Oh yes! Just now it belongs to the son of one of our professors. It's on the first floor, as you see, and close by the entrance. So, while the new students are coming in, we are using it as a sort of reception room.

MRS. VANWORTH. A very pleasant one, too! Can I look about here?

MR. MONEY. Certainly.

She moves toward the Right Upper Entrance, then compares what she sees beyond it with what she sees beyond the Left Upper Entrance.

MRS. VANWORTH. Two bedrooms—quite large—with sunny outlook! (*She looks through the Right Second Entrance.*) And here—why! a bathroom with all the modern conveniences! There was nothing of this sort in the other dormitories that you showed us.

MR. MONEY. Oh no! They were rooms for the Freshmen. These are reserved for the upper classes.

MRS. VANWORTH (*glancing at the DOCTOR in a confused way*). Upper classes!

BERT. He means in the College sense, mother.

DOCTOR. College is a world in itself, you know. Upperclass people outside of it are those who have been in society a generation or two; inside of it they are those who have been in college a year or two.

MRS. VANWORTH. A very arbitrary distinction, I should say!

DOCTOR. It is—in both cases.

MRS. VANWORTH. My son belongs to a class that has had a bathroom at home. He ought to have one here.

BERT. Oh, mother, I can get along without it!

MRS. VANWORTH. The animals in the zoological garden can get along without a tank, but they can keep cleaner with one (*looking critically into the room at the Right Upper*). Are both these rooms occupied? This one seems vacant.

MR. MONEY. It is just now. The one who had it last year is not coming back.

MRS. VANWORTH (*looking toward the DOCTOR*). Why, then—

DOCTOR. I catch your thought. The surest place of refuge for one out of place is a vacancy. It rids him of the trouble of upsetting the plans of others, in order to set up his own. No need of fighting for an empty niche when using eyes can find one.

MRS. VANWORTH. Precisely. If the room be vacant, why—

BERT. But, mother, if there be a college law against it—

MR. MONEY. It is not exactly a college law. One might call it a tradition.

MRS. VANWORTH. Oh, only that! What, exactly, *is* the tradition?

MR. MONEY. What I said. These rooms usually go to the upper-classmen.

MRS. VANWORTH. I will tell you, Doctor, we can make that all right. (*To MR. MONEY*) If Bertie had been here last year, how much would he have paid?

MR. MONEY. For his room? For the whole year, you mean?

MRS. VANWORTH. Yes, and for board, too.

MR. MONEY. Oh, between four and five hundred dollars.

MRS. VANWORTH. Now if we pay you that amount, although he was not here, he'll be related to the college—will he not?—exactly as he would have been if he had been here?

MR. MONEY. You mean to the treasury of the college?

MRS. VANWORTH. Yes.

BERT. But, mother, I don't want them to treat me any differently from other students.

MRS. VANWORTH. So little comes to us in any way, my boy, that none of us can afford not to avail ourselves of our advantages. What's the use of having a fortune if you're obliged to live like a farmer? (*To the Doctor*) You know I can never get this boy to look out for himself.

BERT. Not your fault, mother! You have tried to train me to it hard enough.

DOCTOR (*to BERT*). And you think that, besides looking out, one occasionally needs to look in, eh?

BERT. Yes; the farmer may have as much to think about as if he were always thinking of a fortune; and what one thinks makes up the most of what one's life is.

MRS. VANWORTH (*to Doctor*). Isn't he a strange child, Doctor?

DOCTOR. So strange, I think you are quite right in giving him an education. Only one in three or four of those who come here seems to think enough to make that project worth while.

MRS. VANWORTH. What do they come here for, then?

DR. CATOR. They must go somewhere at their age. One couldn't keep them at home, and have much pleasure there. Here they can get rid of their surplus energy by knocking and kicking around for a time in athletics, and, when they get through with that, they can play billiards in the University Club.

MRS. VANWORTH. I thought they came here to cultivate their understanding.

DR. CATOR. So they do; but part of everybody's understanding is in his heels.

BERT. And those that cultivate only their heels are in danger of using them, by and by, mainly in trampling other people down.

DR. CATOR. Where did you learn that, Bert? When your father made his toss for you he landed something with the head up.

MRS. VANWORTH (*to MR. MONEY*). But about this room, Mr. Money. Is there any objection to the conditions that I mentioned? You know I would rather pay double the five hundred dollars than have my son uncomfortable.

MR. MONEY. I hardly see how there could be any objection on the part of the college. The students—

MRS. VANWORTH. Oh, we could make it all right with them! You mean the one that rooms here?

MR. MONEY. Yes, mainly; yes, of course.

MRS. VANWORTH. The son of a professor, you say? There isn't any son of a professor, is there, who wouldn't like to room with the son of a millionaire? There are quite a number of things, you know, that we could do for him. I imagine we could repay him at least for this room.

MR. MONEY. Of course. I think, though, that I ought to ask him first. You see the situation is unusual. Why, here he comes!

Enter—Left Second—HUGH.

(*To HUGH*) We are using your room, Hugh, as we threatened to do.

Enter—Left Second—IDA.

Ah, Miss Ida, too. (*To MRS. VANWORTH*) Mrs. VanWorth, this is Miss Ida Wright, and Mr. Hugh Wright (*to IDA and HUGH*) Dr. Cator and Mr. VanWorth. This young gentlemen has been looking for a room. They are not satisfied with anything that I have shown them.

BERT. I beg your pardon, Mr. Money. I'm well enough satisfied. It's mother you mean.

MR. MONEY. Yes, of course. But, of course, you want to do as your mother wishes. Mrs. VanWorth has offered to pay (*looking at MRS. VANWORTH*)—

MRS. VANWORTH. A thousand dollars.

MR. MONEY. A thousand dollars—twice as much as the young man would have paid already, if he had been here last year—in case the college will waive the fact that he was not here, and allow him to room with you.

HUGH. I see.

MR. MONEY. And will you allow it?

HUGH. Humph! It would hardly be right to deprive the college of a thousand dollars.

IDA (*to HUGH*). But Hugh—

MRS. VANWORTH (*to MR. MONEY*). It doesn't concern the young lady, does it?

IDA (*to MRS. VANWORTH*). No; not directly.

MRS. VANWORTH. Is the room engaged?

DOCTOR (*mischievously*). Perhaps she wishes it for something that will be.

IDA. Beg your pardon. I wasn't thinking of any one in particular, but of the college traditions. I thought that it might not be pleasant.

MRS. VANWORTH. For your brother, I suppose. (*To BERT*) Not very flattering for you, Bert.

IDA. Oh, I am sorry! I wasn't thinking of him, either, except as he would be a Freshman in an upper-classman's room.

MRS. VANWORTH. But you understand. We have made that all right.

IDA. Yes, I understand; but there are so many kinds of understanding. One can never judge of what other people will understand. (*To HUGH*) You think you ought to do it, Hugh?

HUGH. Why not?—if Mr. Money thinks it all right. He's the one in charge here.

MRS. VANWORTH. We can have the room, then?

HUGH. So far as I am concerned, yes.

MRS. VANWORTH. Come right in today?

HUGH. Certainly.

BERT. But, mother—

MRS. VANWORTH (*to BERT*). Oh, my boy, my boy, you will never have any success in life unless you learn to avail yourself of your opportunities. Think of what a chance this is. (*To HUGH*) You are very kind, Mr. Wright. (*To BERT*) Far better than we could have expected. (*To HUGH*) And there are ways in which I think that we can prove to you, by and by, that it was quite wise for you to be so accommodating. (*To BERT*) Let's go now and get the trunks, and then come back and get you settled. (*To HUGH, ignoring IDA*) Good by, Mr. Wright.

*Exeunt—Left Second—*MRS. VANWORTH, the DOCTOR and BERT.

IDA (*to HUGH*). Why did you let him come here?

HUGH. How could I help it? Could the son of a professor, knowing the financial condition of the college, refuse a contribution of a thousand dollars?

IDA. But—for the sake of the young man! You know how they'll haze him—a Freshman buying his way into an upper-classman's room!

HUGH. The experience may do him good.

IDA. But what'll it do for you? If you have a row here, it's you will be held responsible—all the more so because the son of a professor.

HUGH. Yes; but think of the delight afforded the other professors in case the son of my father gets into trouble! Besides, I shall die in a good cause. When you think of how a college president swells if he gets a thousand dollars, I, the mere son of a mere professor, can afford to burst.

Enter—Left Second—DAN STRONG.

DAN. Hello, Hugh! Good day, Miss Ida. So you are the people we have just been hearing about!

HUGH. How so?

DAN. Didn't that old woman and her Freshman son go out of here just now—with old "Money bags"?

HUGH. I think that describes the party.

DAN. Do you know what she said?

HUGH. Who?

DAN. The old woman.

HUGH. What was it?

DAN (*imitating*). "Bertie," she said, "did you notice how I kept down that uppish young woman? It's very important to learn how, merely by one's manner, to indicate the distance that separates a person of that sort from oneself." (*To Ida*) Were you the uppish young woman, Miss Ida?

IDA. I fear I was.

DAN. I hope you felt properly humiliated.

IDA. I hope so.

DAN. Like a lamb kicked by a goat, I suppose. You know, I never like to see a woman kick. Her dress doesn't go with it. It seems as if she ought to trip up; or, if she doesn't do it of herself, be made to do it by somebody else.

HUGH. Oh, that's only the mother! She's a fool. The boy appears to be quite a decent fellow.

DAN (*to IDA*). What was the matter? Did you have a quarrel with her? What did she caution her boy against you for?

HUGH. Ida wanted to keep me from letting him room with me here?

DAN. Letting him room with you?

HUGH. Yes.

DAN. A freshman?—going to room here?

HUGH. You see I couldn't well get out of it. The old woman offered Money-bags a thousand dollars—twice as much as the college would have received if her boy had been here a whole year—on the condition that the college would treat him just as if he *had* been here, and so let him into this room. Of course, I couldn't refuse to allow the college to get a thousand dollars.

DAN. I see—but she!—why didn't she offer four thousand dollars and get his diploma for him without his coming here at all? Humph! There's only one thing for us to do.

HUGH. What's that?

DAN. Stand up for the college, maintain its dignity, and show him there are a few things here that money can't buy. One thing is the experience of Freshman year.

IDA. What did I tell you, Hugh?

DAN. When you were uppish, eh? They should have harkened to you. Those who are too stupid to take hints have to be trained at times by getting hits. Who are these money slingers, anyway?

HUGH. Why, the VanWorths.

DAN. *Are they!* and that young fellow, I suppose, is the heir that the papers have been talking so much about? We can give them more to talk about.

HUGH. But, really, he seems quite respectable. He didn't want to room here. It was his mother. She almost forced it on him.

DAN. All right! Then we must deal with his mother, too.

HUGH. You are logical, Dan. But logic is a lance that never hits what lies outside its range.

DAN. And is never used by a wise man except on what gets *inside* his range. Isn't she coming back here again today?

HUGH. Yes, I think so. They have gone after the trunks.

DAN. Well, I shall be back soon to help her; and I purpose to bring some town-girls with me, girls that will do what you, Miss Ida, apparently, can't do.

IDA. What's that?

DAN. Command—enforce—her respect.

IDA. How so?

DAN. In a book, and, sometimes, in other places, where there is danger that people can't understand what is said, a footnote is brought in (*kicking out his foot*). When this is done, sometimes one uses a star if he can. Do you recall Ben Wylie, the star actress of our college-comedy last term?

HUGH. You don't mean?—

DAN. He has all his fuss-up in his closet now; and for two days has been fluttering around all the Freshmen on the ground like a forty-year old maid—excuse me Miss Ida—in an endeavor to make some practical use of it.

HUGH (*laughing*). Oh, Dan!

DAN. And, Miss Ida, you must stay and help us.

IDA. Oh, I can't do that!

DAN. Yes you can. You can't avoid it, when you think of all the fun. Come, promise me that you'll stay. The whole thing will be so much more effective if we have a real lady present. The contrast between the uppish and (*stroking his chin*) the downish will be so artistic.

IDA. Well, I'll think about it.

DAN. "I go, but I return."

Exit—Left Second—DAN.

IDA (*to HUGH*). Of course, I oughtn't to stay.

HUGH. I don't know. Perhaps you ought. You see, if you do, they'll be much more gentlemanly—perhaps I ought to say more ladylike.

IDA. Will make less noise, you think?

HUGH. Yes; and the faculty will be much less likely to find us out. Besides, if they do find us out—either the faculty or the VanWorths, for that matter—they'll be less likely to fancy the trick planned or even known by me beforehand. They wouldn't think that I would want to have you present at a premeditated hazing. (*Knock at the door at Left Second*) Come in.

*Enter—Left Second—*MRS. VANWORTH *and* BERT.

Ah, back again! We had hardly expected you so soon.

MRS. VANWORTH. We found the expressman just outside on the campus. He is going to get the trunks and bring them up right off. (*Looking at IDA rather superciliously*) I see your sister is here yet.

HUGH. Yes; during the vacation she has been here, doing more or less studying with me. After this, of course, she'll have to stay at home.

MRS. VANWORTH (*still addressing HUGH*). What has she been studying?

HUGH. The same things that I have. She intends to go through the whole course with me.

MRS. VANWORTH. This is not a coeducational institution?

HUGH. Oh no, she doesn't attend recitations or lectures. She merely studies; and I help her out; or, if I can't, father does it.

MRS. VANWORTH. I should be afraid that studying all the while she would have but little time left for what is so important in a young woman—to learn that which comes from going into society.

HUGH. To tell the truth, Mrs. VanWorth, I'm afraid there isn't very much of what you would term society here. What society we have is mainly made up of the fellows.

MRS. VANWORTH. And a *fellow* is not exactly the term that one would like to apply to a person who is to associate with his sister.

BERT. Oh, but, mother, as a college term, it means, you know—

MRS. VANWORTH. I fear it means that the standards of society are not always maintained by our young men when away from home.

HUGH. Really, now, Mrs. VanWorth—

MRS. VANWORTH. Of course, Mr. Wright, one would expect you to defend them. It's perfectly proper too. You were brought up in this atmosphere, so to speak. Are there many young ladies in town?

HUGH (*thinking of the expected comedy-actors*). Yes—such as they are!

MRS. VAN WORTH (to BERT). Did you hear that, Bertie? (*To HUGH*) You know, of course, the customs of the city and of the country are different. We have been very careful about Bertie,

and, in case you should find him not associating with the people of the town as much as you might expect, you will understand his feelings, and know what his reasons are.

HUGH. Certainly.

Knock at Left Second Entrance.

HUGH goes to open the door.

Enter—Left Second—EXPRESSMEN with two trunks.

(The trunks are placed at the Right, unstrapped by the EXPRESSMEN, and then unlocked and opened by BERT.)

Exeunt—Left Second—EXPRESSMEN.

Enter—Left Second—DAN STRONG.

HUGH. Oh, is this you, DAN? *(To MRS. VANWORTH)* Mrs. VanWorth, this is Mr. Strong, and *(to DAN)* this is Mr. VanWorth. He is coming here to room with me.

(MRS. VANWORTH bows. BERT rises from the trunk that he has been opening, moves toward DAN, and, as DAN puts out his hand, takes it and shakes it.)

DAN *(to HUGH)*. Is he? *(To BERT)* I congratulate you. Such comfortable quarters!—and Hugh is such a fine fellow, and goes with such a fine set!

BERT. Yes.

DAN. Yes, of course—the son of a professor, you know—and so much better for you than if he went with a set of hazers!

MRS. VANWORTH. Hazers? Do they have them in this college?

DAN. I should rather think they had! You know James H. Gore, don't you, the great criminal lawyer of New York?

MRS. VANWORTH. I know who he is.

DAN. Well, they say they killed his son here a few years ago—put him under the pump, and gave him pneumonia.

MRS. VANWORTH. Under the pump?

DAN. Why, yes! You never heard of that? That's an old trick. Some time, when the thermometer is about twenty degrees below zero, it wouldn't be surprising to see a good part of the whole campus white with Freshmen in their nightgowns, all frozen to them, standing in line like the marble statues lining the Sieger Alley that one reads about in Berlin.

MRS. VANWORTH *(in evident agitation)*. What?

DAN. Oh, not Hugh and his friends! They don't do such things. That's the reason why I was congratulating your son.

MRS. VANWORTH *(to DAN)*. But you really mean to say— *(She continues to talk to DAN at the left)*.

IDA (*who has gone to the right, and is standing near BERT and addressing him*). You seem a little incredulous, Mr. VanWorth?

BERT (*glancing at her cautiously*). Yes.

IDA. To tell the truth, I'm rather glad of it. It's well for Freshmen to be cautious, you know. There are all sorts of pitfalls here. If you tumble in too deeply when a Freshman it may be the end of Senior year before you can get out.

BERT. I hardly expect to be made as easy a prey as that?

IDA. I hope not.

BERT (*looking at her critically*). Why not?

IDA (*rather embarrassed*). Why—you are going to room with my brother; and, next to having him popular himself, I should like to have him have a popular chum.

BERT. Yes, I see. Thank you. It's well my mother came with me. This'll let them know something about our family.

DAN (*to MRS. VANWORTH, who has approached the trunks again*). Can't I help you unpack, Mrs. VanWorth?

MRS. VANWORTH. You are very kind. (*She hands him a case in which, exposed to view, are a silver backed set of brushes and combs.*)

DAN. Why, these are fine! How beautiful, and how appropriate! (*He takes them to the left, where are IDA and HUGH, while BERT stays at the right to help his mother*) Just the things to go with this room! No wonder they didn't want Bertie in a Freshman dormitory! (*To HUGH and IDA, as he exhibits what he holds*) Did you ever see anything so ridiculous? (*He places it on the table.*)

HUGH (*smiling*). Yes—in a novel.

DAN. But then only when some one was going to be married.

HUGH. I feel as if *I* were going to be married. He's to be my chum.

DAN. You wait a little. (*Glancing significantly toward the Left Second Entrance*) I'll show you in a minute whom you ought to marry. (*MRS. VANWORTH and BERT are taking from the trunk a gorgeous colored dressing gown and smoking cap. DAN, HUGH and IDA notice them*) Look at those things, will you?—we'll have to found a new secret society, dress him up in them, and make him the high cockalorum of the whole shebang.

HUGH. It's a pretty bad thing to be born with such a fool for a mother.

DAN. But worse not to be weaned from her. (*A knocking on the door at the Left Second*) Here come the milk carts now, I guess.

(DAN goes to the door and opens it.)

Enter—Left Second—BEN WYLIE and another Student. (Both are dressed in the outdoor walking hats and gowns of ladies. BEN is very graceful. The other is evidently embarrassed, and is occasionally awkward.)

DAN (*with profuse politeness to the two as they enter*). Oh, Miss Crozier and Miss VanDeuzen! How do you do? You came here to find Miss Ida, I suppose?

BEN. Yes, we heard that she was here.

DAN. You heard the truth. Walk in—will you not?

BEN (*with apparent embarrassment*). Excuse us. We are not making a call, you know—came merely on an errand. It was important.

DAN. But now that you are here—you are not the only ladies present, you see. (MRS. VANWORTH and BERT stand looking at BEN and his companion.) By the way, how fortunate!—just the opportunity! (To MRS. VANWORTH) Mrs. VanWorth, will you allow me? These ladies have called in accidentally to find Miss Ida. (*Introducing the two*) Miss Crozier and Miss VanDeuzen. (MRS. VANWORTH bows, as do BEN and his companion) Mr. VanWorth. (BERT bows. *The two who have just entered keep at the left, and, apparently, talk with IDA and HUGH.*) (DAN, after introducing the two, crosses to the right, and talks to MRS. VANWORTH. BERT takes some clothing from the trunk.)

Exit—Right Upper—BERT.

MRS. VANWORTH (*to DAN, referring to the newcomers*). Do they live in the town here?

DAN. Only temporarily. They have several residences, I believe. Mr. Crozier, you know, has a gold mine out in Nevada; and Mr. VanDeuzen is his partner.

MRS. VANWORTH. They seem very ladylike.

DAN. Oh, they are, very, very.

(BEN and his companion come toward MRS. VANWORTH.)

MRS. VANWORTH (*to the two*). Am glad to meet you, young ladies. (*Pointing to the trunk*). We were just unpacking.

BEN. Is your son going to occupy this room?

MRS. VANWORTH. Yes.

BEN. A Sophomore, or a Junior, I suppose.

MRS. VANWORTH. Oh, no—a Freshman! I see; you think it strange that my son should get this room when a Freshman. But we have arranged all that. You know that I am Mrs. VanWorth.

BEN. Oh, yes, I understand. My papa has said so often that he wished that we could meet you. Have you ever visited Nevada?

MRS. VANWORTH. Nevada? No.

BEN. To tell the truth, I am not so sure that you would find it interesting. But for us—we live there, you know.—We should be more apt to meet you, I suppose, at our place in Lenox, or in Newport.

MRS. VANWORTH. Yes, of course! Are there many of your set who have places in this neighborhood?

BEN. Oh no; not many, not many—between us, to tell the truth, hardly any at all! But the scenery all about—you must have noticed it—is very fine; and the people—they haven't very much money, of course, but, as papa says, they have mind; and, just as a matter of change, you see, one can be interested sometimes even in that.

DAN (*coming to BEN's relief, and using for his purpose the silver-backed toilet-set that he takes from the table and brings with him, and speaking, first, to MRS. VANWORTH*). I beg pardon. I want Miss Crozier and her friend to see this. The whole thing is so fine, and the pattern so exquisite! (DAN, BEN and the other student cross to the left where are HUGH and IDA.)

Enter—Right Upper—BERT.

MRS. VANWORTH. Bertie, I feel like taking back part of what I said. There are, at least, some charming girls out here.

BERT (*glancing toward the right*). They are pretty good looking.

MRS. VANWORTH. Pretty good? Why, Miss Crozier there is what I should call handsome; and, then, so intelligent and bright! She's the daughter of that rich miner out in Nevada.

BERT. Miner? Crozier—I never heard of any such man.

MRS. VANWORTH. Why, he owns a gold mine in Nevada; and he's her father. The other is his partner's daughter. They only come here a little while in summer. If I were you, I think I should talk to them a little, and get acquainted. It might lead to your meeting others who come here to visit them.

(BERT moves toward the right. DAN, who has been pointing to the dressing-gown, speaks to him.)

DAN. Oh, Mr. VanWorth, Miss Crozier has just been admiring this so!—thinks the colors so harmonious—go so well with the room!

BEN (*in a coquettish way*). Did I say only with the room, Mr. Strong? (BERT looks at BEN, who speaks in apparent embarrassment) Oh—I—he—he was saying that one always liked to see nice people have nice things.

BERT. Nice people, eh? (*To DAN*) How can you know that they are nice?

(*DAN indicates clearly to the other student, HUGH and IDA that he wants BEN and BERT left to talk by themselves. All but these two move toward the left, DAN putting the toilet-set on the table.*)

BEN (*to BERT*). Oh, any person could tell that, right away!

BERT. It's a little unwise, isn't it, to come to too sudden conclusions?

BEN. Don't you believe in instinct?

BERT. It wouldn't be polite for me to tell a young lady, especially, that I didn't, would it?

BEN. Is that the only reason that you wouldn't say so?

BERT. Do you think you have any right to ask about my reasons?

BEN. Isn't there a right of soul sometimes?

BERT. Of soul?—of soul? Do you know you are quite a charming young lady?

BEN. Oh, you flatter, Mr. VanWorth! but then, you know, when some people say things, we are almost obliged to believe them.

BERT. One must be careful what he says, then.

BEN. Except with people that he feels that he can trust. There are such people.

BERT. You—are you going to stay in town long? You must let me call and get acquainted with you.

BEN. Yes; I shall be very happy—but there are people that we hardly feel that we need to get acquainted with.

BERT. I can call, then, can I?

BEN. There is no reason why you shouldn't.

BERT (*fervently*). There is the best of reasons why I should.

IDA (*suddenly interrupting BEN and BERT*). Oh, Miss Crozier, Miss Crozier, Hugh wants to speak to you a moment. (*BEN turns, evidently very gratefully, toward HUGH. IDA continues to BERT*) I am afraid that I interrupted you.

BERT. Not at all. You had a perfect right. (*Looking at her critically*) But, perhaps, you had a reason.

IDA. Only a general one. Do you remember the caution I gave you?

BERT. You think that they may make fun of me, and call me a lady's man, eh? I think I could stand that.

MRS. VANWORTH (*seeing IDA and BERT together, and looking suspiciously toward IDA*) Bertie? (*BERT turns and walks toward her*) What was that professor's daughter saying to you?

BERT. Oh, nothing much!—a little jealous, perhaps—thought me paying too much attention to Miss Crozier.

MRS. VANWORTH. Absurd creature! But how did you like Miss Crozier?

BERT. Anybody would like her, I think.

MRS. VANWORTH. Yes, so tasteful in her dress, so refined in her manner, so much of a lady every way! Quite unlike that sister of your future roommate! I am going to invite those two to visit me when they come to New York.

BERT. Better not do that yet, would you? Isn't it a little soon?

MRS. VANWORTH. It might be, but I want that Miss Wright to know that I recognize differences. She thinks that I have treated her a little coolly, and I have. But there have been reasons for it. Now she will perceive them. (*She crosses to the left and speaks to BEN*) Miss Crozier, do you and Miss VanDuezen ever come to New York?

BEN. Oh, yes, quite often!

MRS. VANWORTH. The next time you come I should be very happy to have you call upon me.

BEN. Why, how very kind in you! and (*addressing IDA*) you will go with us too—not so?

(*MRS. VANWORTH looks offended. IDA notices this.*)

IDA. Humph! Papa, you know, doesn't let me go everywhere.

MRS. VANWORTH. No; only where she is especially invited, I suppose.

(*This is too much of an insult to the favorite of the college for BEN to allow it to go unrebuked.*)

BEN. Well, I should think I was a confounded ass if I didn't go to a snob's house whenever I got a chance. (*At this, very naturally, both MRS. VANWORTH and BERT look very much shocked. BEN ignores the fact, and goes on, to BERT*) I hope you like your room, Mr. VanWorth.

BERT (*curtly*) Yes.

BEN. I always like it when I sleep here. (*MRS. VANWORTH and BERT look still more shocked. BEN takes a cigar from the table and lights it*) Say, Hugh, can't you order up some high balls? Oh, I forgot—the son of a professor might be found out! (*BEN looks at BERT and MRS. VANWORTH*) Well, I am pretty bad. I admit it—hardly expected to find such people, eh? (*He snatches off his hat and wig, and with the so-called Miss VanDuezen gets, rather vulgarly, out of his gown*) It was well played, though—not so? If you are to become a George Washington, Mr. VanWorth, you will have to acknowledge that you almost lost your heart; and you, Mrs. VanWorth, that you were sure that an outrageously insulting and—may I say it?—vulgar Sophomore was very much more of a lady than this poor professor's daughter. Yes, you were. You invited the Sophomore to your home.

BERT. But she thought—

BEN. One thing to learn in college is this—that before you do anything you should think, not once, but twice.

MRS. VANWORTH (*who, after several severe efforts, has finally become enabled to control her voice*). I shall speak to the college authorities, sir, and have you punished.

BEN. Oh, no; I am not afraid of that! We have been teaching you to think twice—and you'll think twice about *this* as well as about other things. You are not going to advertise in all the papers of the country how big a fool an inexperienced boy could make, not only of your son, but also of yourself.

BERT. Really, mother, the whole thing is nothing but a college joke. There is only one way in which to receive a joke, and not be hurt by it. One must himself be able to make light of it.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

*As a Sophomore in College.*SCENE: *The same as in Act I; time, about a year later.**The rising curtain reveals HUGH sitting at the table, reading.**Enter—Right Second—BERT.**(He is dressed like the chauffeur of an automobile. He sits down.)*

HUGH. Had a good time, Bert?

BERT. Oh, you know, Hugh! No fun to go out in a motor alone!

HUGH. But why go alone? Plenty of fellows would be glad to go with you.

BERT. Yes; plenty of fellows would be glad to have me for their chauffeur, garage-keeper, courier; but, once in a while, one wants a companion. That kind will not go with me.

HUGH. But you are on good terms with those that belong to your own fraternity, aren't you?

BERT. They don't belong to my fraternity. I belong to theirs.

HUGH. What's the difference?

BERT. The difference between a mass that is a whole and an individual that is a part. The body doesn't belong to the tail. The tail belongs to the body.

HUGH. But you joined them?

BERT. No; hardly that! My family pushed me against them, I tumbled, and they took me in. They did it on account of my money. That is what they saw in me,—is what they have made the college see in me. It's an awful handicap, Hugh, to be the son of a millionaire,—to know you have something inside of you, and yet to know that everybody about supposes that all you have is on the outside,—that you are a make-up not of mind but of money. Money glitters and attracts—glitters for moths and attracts the mercenary; makes one a center of superficiality, brainlessness, selfishness, sordidness, sensuality.

HUGH. You are not that sort of a center, Bert.

BERT. If not, it's not because my family haven't done their best to make me it; or the college, either, for that matter. Why, I would about as soon be pitched into a ditch and have my ears filled with the filth of it as to have them stored, as they are, with Dick Carter's stories about getting drunk, Jim Gales' about betting at bridge, and Tom Benson's about ballet girls.

HUGH. There's one redeeming feature, Bert. If they're so frank with you, you can be frank with them. A little unalloyed truth from the inside of your brain transferred to the inside of theirs might work like leaven, and do them good.

BERT. Why try to force medicine down a throat that's always throwing up! I have as much as I can do trying to dodge the output. I thank my stars every day of my life, despite the hazing it has cost me, that mother stumbled me into this room. You are the only man in college of my type that has ever given me real recognition.

HUGH. But I have tried to explain you to the others.

BERT. I know it, Hugh; but there are some things that neither you nor I can explain. One is why people always prefer to be governed by their own prejudices rather than by other's proofs. When you talk about me the fellows merely think you are doing your duty toward the college that put me here, and is getting money by it.

HUGH. Oh, Bert, now, really, you are too sensitive!

(A knock at the Left Second Entrance.)

BERT. Come in.

Enter—Left Second—IDA.

BERT *(rising)*. Ah, Miss Ida! Good day.

IDA *(to BERT)*. Good day. *(To HUGH)* Mother sent me to ask you, Hugh, not to forget to drop in at the plumber's when you go down-town this afternoon. *(To BERT)* I'm sorry to have interrupted your talk.

BERT. Oh, no interruption, Miss Ida. By the way, I have my car out this afternoon. Couldn't I persuade you to take a turn with me?

IDA. Thank you, Mr. VanWorth. You are very kind—but—you know father never wants me to ride with students.

BERT. But I saw you riding only yesterday with Pete Bennett.

IDA. Yes, yes—Pete Bennett; but he, you know, is merely—why, he pays his way through college by taking care of the horse and stable of the family next door to us. I was only going out with him to do an errand.

BERT. Humph! Some people that I know in the city would think it strange that you could ride with a student who's a stableman and not with one like me.

IDA. Oh, but he's different, you know! He has to work hard, and he goes only with other students that work hard.

BERT. And I?

IDA. Yes, I know you work hard enough. Hugh says you do. But there are a good many that you go with, and ride with, too, that father—well, you know father thinks that girls in college towns ought to be particularly careful.

BERT (*to HUGH*). There, Hugh, what did I tell you? (*To IDA*) I was just saying that there seemed to be some students, too, who thought that they ought to be particularly careful. That's the reason why, Miss Ida, unless I want to ride alone, I'm obliged to ride with the set that your father doesn't like.

IDA. Why so?

BERT. Because I'm the son of a millionaire.

IDA. Oh, but you are very much more than that!

BERT. You think so?

IDA. I know so. Hugh says you're a fine scholar, and a beautiful writer. You know he's going to get you into the Literary Club.

HUGH. Be careful, Ida. It has not been done yet; and the fellows might resent it, if they heard it hinted that it might be done.

IDA. I know that perfectly well. I shouldn't speak of it except to you and to Mr. VanWorth. I know that he knows about it.

BERT. He does; and is very thankful for it. The fact is I feel here, sometimes, like a man in a deep hole who needs to be lifted to a higher atmosphere, before he can breathe naturally.

IDA. Yes; quite true! A literary man needs a literary atmosphere.

Exit—Left Upper—HUGH.

BERT. Not merely literary! Whatever makes the heart beat quicker makes the brain move faster. You see I had a practical, and an intellectual, reason as well—for asking you to ride with me.

IDA. That's impossible, Mr. VanWorth.

BERT. What does your father think of me, anyway, Miss Ida?

IDA. I think that Hugh would influence his opinion.

BERT. And others, too, you mean. What others?

IDA. Of course, a man's always judged, to some extent, by the company he keeps.

BERT. Yes; but you, you know, will not let me keep your company.

IDA. Oh, Mr. VanWorth! You can call at our house.

BERT. The company which I keep, as you say, is not that which I chose for myself, but that to which my city friends introduced me.

IDA. Some of them ought to know you pretty well.

BERT. They might not know very well those to whom they introduced me. Does your father suppose that I care little or nothing for study; that I came here mainly to get a diploma, and so a reputation for what I don't deserve; or that I'm spending my nights so as to get through, not only college life, but all life apparently, in the speediest way possible? I wonder that he lets me call at your house at all. I suppose he does it to please Hugh.

IDA. Perhaps not entirely.

BERT. I hope not, Miss Ida. It's pleasant, at least, to see a young lady thoroughly polite.

IDA (*passing out to the Left Second*). Thank you. Good day.

Exit—Left Second—IDA.

Enter—Left Upper—HUGH.

BERT (*to HUGH*). I'm rather sorry you told your sister about the Literary Club.

HUGH. Why is that?

BERT. They may not elect me.

HUGH. Oh, yes, I think they will! They have given you your stunt—not so?

BERT. I should rather think they had.

HUGH. They probably intend to let you in, then. They almost always do it after that.

BERT. Almost always, yes! The truth is, Hugh, I want it too much; and I have usually found that the thing that I wanted with all my heart was the thing that I failed to get. I sometimes feel that I shall go insane unless something happens that can make my college life and companionship more of a real success. Oh, I know it's a weakness. It ought to be snubbed out of me, perhaps. I'm afraid that it will be. But, Hugh, it hurts, it hurts.—I must take home my motor.

Exit—Left Second—BERT.

(*HUGH goes to the library shelves, looks over them, as if searching for a particular book, apparently finds it, then sits in the chair by the table, and begins to read. Sounds of a students' song are heard, and the tramping of feet, keeping time to its rhythm, followed by a knock on the door at the Left Second.*)

HUGH. Come in. (*He rises.*)

Enter Left Second—DAN STRONG, BEN WYLIE, PETE BENNETT, and one or two other students, all singing.

HUGH. Hello!

DAN. How are you? We saw your chum go out; so we decided to come in and talk matters over. Our committee is going to examine him this afternoon. How soon will he be back?

HUGH. Very soon, I think. Went out to take his machine to the garage.

BEN. You know some of us are a little doubtful about him.

HUGH. I'm very sorry for that. He's a thoroughly good fellow, and a thoroughly intellectual one, too.

DAN. But think of his antecedents! The most of us are poor, and mighty poor. It exhausts our resources to treat with peanuts and small beer. He wouldn't want anything less than terrapin and champagne.

HUGH. Oh, you mistake him!

PETE. Think of the spread he gave here last month.

HUGH. That was his mother's.

PETE. And his mother is the one who has trained him. Where we could get along with shirt sleeves and overalls he would want a dress suit.

HUGH. A man isn't to blame for what his mother does.

DAN. We're not blaming him—merely stating facts. Why should we try to bring him down to our level? Or—to put it differently—why should we risk changing the whole character of the club in order to bring it up to his level?

HUGH. We shouldn't need to change the character of the club.

DAN. No need to do it, perhaps; but we should—little by little—gradually. He would be sure to get in more of his set; and then—little by little—gradually—that's the way such things are always done—all that the club stands for would be changed, and lost.

PETE. The way to prevent anything from going to smithereens is to keep out the entering wedge.

HUGH. I hope you'll think better of it, fellows. He's a man of very high literary tastes and aspirations; and would benefit us, I'm sure, as much as we should benefit him. But I have an errand. You'll excuse me, of course. I'll be back presently. Before you do anything definite about it, let me see you again.

DAN. Yes.

BEN. Certainly.

Exit—Left Second—HUGH.

DAN (*as all take seats*). Hugh's a mighty good fellow.

PETE. Yes; but in this case, of course, he has his reasons.

BEN. Not bad ones, either, to tell the truth!

DAN. Not for him—only for us. I hope he'll be away till we get through here. If not, we may have to sit down on two instead of one. The truth is everybody in college knows how Bert was thrust upon Hugh. So Hugh can go with him, and not be considered a bootlick. Very few of the rest of us could—and the club, as a body, not at all. We should lose all our college influence.

BEN. And offices, I suppose, when it came to a college election.

DAN. Why not? We should risk it, at least. You know how *you* would feel toward a set of bootlicks.

BEN. But if he's so literary, as Hugh says—

DAN. Then let him prove it. He hasn't done so yet—at least not for the college in general. When he's done it—after a year or two, perhaps—then the conditions may change. There's another thing, too, that I think ought to be considered. Dick Carter has been going around saying that he knows that Bert expects to join us.

BEN. Who told him that, do you suppose?—Bert?

DAN. Oh, no; Bert's not a fool. But, probably, he's been confiding in his mother. Some people's ears and throats are so near together that when you tickle the one the other is sure to be heard from.

BEN. If he's been telling that mother of his about us that ought to settle it—almost, at least.

DAN. Why not entirely? If the college knows that he expects it, and we disappoint him, that fact alone will emphasize our action and the reason for it, and so increase the club's influence—not so?

BEN. A pretty good idea, yes! But how are you going to manage it? If we reject him, we should make *him* think, at least, that we had a literary reason.

DAN. Well, he has fallen into the old trap—has been correcting for us—and bettering, as he thinks, choice specimens from Ruskin, Matthew Arnold and Macaulay.

PETE. Not enough in that, is there?—will be sure to find out sometime that others of us, though let in, have done precisely the same.

BEN. Suppose we ask him to read some of his own writings, criticize them sharply, get him mad, and then have a row with him.

PETE. That would almost equal the Miss Crozier episode. Would you box with him, Ben, if necessary? You know you're a little fellow, but you can lay out almost anybody.

BEN. Of course I'd box with him.

DAN. Hold on. I think he must be coming now.

Enter—Left Entrance—BERT.

BERT (*to those in the room*). Good day. (*The others rise.*)

DAN. Good day, Mr. VanWorth. You see, we have kept our promise.

BERT. Yes; it was very kind of you. (*BERT goes into the room beyond Right Upper Entrance, then returns without some of his automobile outfit, and sits down, as do the others.*)

DAN. Of course, you know, Mr. VanWorth, it would never do for a literary club not to make more or less of a literary examination of its candidates.

BERT. Yes, I understand. I suppose you got those essays that I corrected? I left them in your room yesterday.

DAN. I got them, yes. But there are two things that we need to inquire about—not only whether the candidate can recognize good writing, but whether he himself can write.

BERT. Hugh said that *he* had told you about that.

DAN. Of course; or else we shouldn't be here at all. At the same time, you know, it's not he, but the committee, that must decide the matter. Have you any essays of your own on hand that you could read to us?

BEN (*to DAN*). Wait, Dan. The best test of one's writing is not what he has worked over, as in an essay, but what he has produced, as one might say, spontaneously, as in a letter, or a journal. (*To BERT*) You keep a journal, don't you? I think Hugh said you did.

BERT. Yes; but one doesn't like to read a private journal in public.

DAN. Oh, we only want to hear parts of it! Haven't you read some of it to Hugh?

BERT. Only what he knew all about—some of my experiences the first week I was here in college.

DAN. Just the sort of thing that we want you to read to us! We don't care to know, do we, about your family secrets?

BERT. Well, if that is what you want—

BEN. It is, fellows, isn't it?

PETE. Certainly.

OTHER STUDENTS. Yes, yes.

BERT (*takes a journal from a drawer and reads*). "The day was calm and beautiful. The sun rose from the darkened east like some majestic oriental monarch from a couch most richly curtained and quilted with the most brilliant hues possible to woven fabrics. In them appeared long alternating lines of gold and crimson on a ground of most ethereal blue, while, here and there, a star still visible gleamed like a gem from out the darker folds that formed the shadows of their glorious surroundings."

DAN. A fine quotation, that! Where did you get it?

BERT. Quotation?

BEN. Yes.

BERT. It was not a quotation. I wrote it.

BEN. Wrote it?—you?—Oh, come now!

DAN. Joking is all well enough, my young man; but this is a serious examination, and joking here is out of place.

BEN. Do you suppose we can't tell the difference between the style of a college student and that of a great genius?

BERT. But really, now, I did write that myself.

BEN. Honor bright?

BERT. Yes, honor bright.

DAN. Let me look at it? (*BERT hands DAN the book; DAN, with a wink at the others, begins to look it over very carefully*) Well, perhaps we shall have to take his word for it. But actually, now, I never knew anything like it, did you?

BEN. How do you feel when you write that sort of thing, Bert?

BERT. Feel?

BEN. Yes; a man can't be inspired without feeling it, can he?

PETE. I should think you would feel like a balloon when it has lost its ballast, and gone bounding up into the highest sunshine.

BEN. Or like a hen that has dropped an egg, and is trembling into cackles from sheer nervous exhaustion.

DAN. Or like a fellow who has flooded himself with so much beer that he is obliged to belch it overboard—very, very light-headed.

(*DAN is busy looking over the journal.*)

BEN (*to DAN*). Does he keep on all the way in that style, Dan?

BERT (*as he reaches toward his journal*). Excuse me; but there may be some private things in that book not intended for public exposure.

DAN (*drawing the journal out of BERT's reach*). You said that you would let us examine you—not so? How can we examine you thoroughly unless we have been thorough about it?

BERT (*a little nettled*). Beg your pardon. This is not a question of thoroughness, but of courtesy.

DAN. Oh, then you are going back on your word, are you?

BERT. I should have to go back a long distance to find any word of mine permitting any one to read everything in that journal.

DAN. Getting huffy, eh? Very well, then. We can drop the examination if you want it.

BEN (*to DAN*). Not now, Dan, it's gone too far.

DAN. Yes; too far not to go farther. Do you know, fellows, what I've found in this book? It was well the Literary Club examined it before it took a snake into its bosom.

BERT. What do you mean?

DAN. Oh, you know what I mean! You've been very gently to our faces; but here, in this book, that you keep shut, I reveal your real character.

BEN. I'm afraid that you may reveal yours if you read there what I have asked you not to read.

DAN. Did you ever hear anything like that, fellows? The idea of a man's writing what he's afraid to have others see! No wonder, though! Do you know what he thinks of you, Ben? Here's what he thought of you the first time you met,—“a d— dash— little brute.” And he wishes that he'd knocked you down at once, as you deserved.

BEN (*pretending to be angered*). Well, he can do it now if he wants.

BERT. When you visit your neighbor's garden you ought to judge it by what appears on the surface. If you choose to dig down into the dirt and soil yourself, it is not his fault but yours.

DAN. Oh, you are a coward, then!

BERT. Am I?

DAN. Any man's a coward who boasts in secret of wanting to do a thing, and then, when the opportunity is offered, is afraid to do it.

BERT. I'm not afraid.

DAN. Not afraid, eh? Fellows, get down those boxing gloves. We shall see about it.

(*All rise. PETE gets down the pair of boxing gloves hanging on the wall. They give one pair to BERT and one pair to BEN. BERT and BEN exchange a few blows, then BEN knocks BERT down.*)

DAN (*to BERT, as he rises*). Aha! Want to try anybody else?

BERT (*putting his hand to his head where he has evidently been hurt*). Yes, in case there is anybody here who's not an expert.

DAN. Aha—caught on, eh? You are improving. But you'll have to improve a good deal yet before you get into the Literary Club. (*Taking some folded manuscripts from his pocket and holding them up, one after another, as he mentions them*) Here are the essays given you to correct. Do you know, young man, who wrote them? This was written by Ruskin; this by Macaulay, and this by Matthew Arnold. You have gone to work and corrected every one of them. This shows your literary judgment, and you corrected them because you thought them written by students; and that shows your literary information. (*He flings the papers on the table*) Ha!

BERT. Just what I suspected! But you gave me your word of honor that they were written by students.

DAN. And so they were. One of them is in my own handwriting; and I'm a student. It was written by a student, then, wasn't it?

Enter—Left Second—HUGH.

(*As he enters a college bell is heard ringing.*)

DAN (*to HUGH*). Too late, Hugh!—must go now to recitation. Committee will report next week. If you want to talk about it, come over and see us later. Good by.

Exeunt—Left Second—DAN, BERT, PETE and OTHER STUDENTS, after bowing to HUGH.

(BERT sits down near the table, leaning his head on his hands.)

HUGH (*to BERT*). What is it, Bert? What did they say—or do?

BERT. You'd better ask what they did not say or do—if it could be construed into anything insulting or discrediting.

HUGH (*taking up the essays left on the table*). No need of feeling badly about these, Bert! It's an old college trick that always traps about nine out of every ten of us. That'll be all right.

BERT. That wasn't the worst of it, Hugh. Before that, they insulted me and provoked me to insult them beyond the possibility, probably, of its ever being made up. They evidently had a purpose in it, too. You knew what I wanted, and why I wanted it. The wish was right on my part, and granting it involved only common consideration and courtesy on their part. Why should they have treated me as they have? No use in their trying to deceive me, or in your trying to make me think I'm mistaken! It was because I'm the son of a millionaire.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

As a Junior in College.

SCENE: *Same as in Acts I and II.*

The rising curtain reveals MR. MONEY, with a notebook and pencil in hand, and BERT. Both are sitting.

MR. MONEY. Yes; the Alumni Association undertook to raise the money; and, very naturally, perhaps, wanted me to be their treasurer. As treasurer of the college, too, it was a thing I hardly liked to do; but there is no valid objection to it, I suppose.

BERT. You think, now, it'll be impossible to get the money?

MR. MONEY. I fear so. There's not a man that I can think of that I've failed to try.

BERT. Exactly how much do you lack?

MR. MONEY. A little over a thousand dollars.

BERT. There must have been mismanagement.

MR. MONEY. There was; but 'twas not intentional. You see the fellows are not business men. They spent too much on the cage and grand stand.

BERT. I should think so! I tell you what I'll do. If you'll promise that not a soul shall know who did it, I'll make up the deficit myself.

MR. MONEY. The whole?

BERT. Say an even thousand. If you get that it'll be easy enough to get the rest.

MR. MONEY (*writing in his book*). It's very generous of you. But, really, you ought to let me tell the fellows of it—only doing justice to yourself.

BERT. No, no; I meant just what I said. And if you find any difficulty in raising the rest, let me know it.

MR. MONEY (*shrugging his shoulders, as if not wholly convinced that Bert is justified in not wishing to have the contribution made known*). You're a friend in need, Mr. VanWorth—no doubt about that! Good morning.

(MR. MONEY and BERT rise and bow to each other.)

Exit—Left Second—MR. MONEY.

Enter—Left Second—PETE BENNETT.

PETE. Is Hugh in?

BERT. No.

PETE. Am sorry.

BERT. Come in and wait for him. Sit down. Hugh was telling me about you. Is it true that you have really and permanently lost your job?

(PETE sits down, as does BERT.)

PETE. I'm afraid it is. You see the horse—old Foster's horse that I was taking care of—ran away. I know I hitched him. Some of the town boys unhitched him, I suppose.

BERT. Nothing to prove it?

PETE. Nothing but by word.

BERT. And the old man is too mad to listen to that?

PETE. About the size of it.

BERT. Yes. Throwing words at a heated brain is like sprinkling water on a red hot stove. It never goes below the surface; and whatever you get back is a combination of hiss and shot, and if it hits you, it burns. You must wait till he cools off.

PETE. That'll come too late. He has engaged another student already.

BERT. Sorry to hear that! Will it interfere with your staying in college?

PETE. Of course; and that's not the worst of it. My sister was going to enter a dramatic school in New York. I can't possibly help her now. I suppose she'll have to give it up.

BERT. Bennett, Bennett? Was that your sister that read at the school exhibition last month?

PETE. Yes.

BERT. Read finely too! See here, Pete, will you take it amiss if I offer to help you a little? You know—everybody in college seems to know—that my father left me money—not so much as some people suppose, but enough to let me lend a little once in a while, and not feel it.

PETE. I thank you; you are very kind; but, really, there's one thing that I've always tried to do: that is, to keep out of debt. In the long run I'm sure it'll be better for me to go out and work for a time.

BERT. But how about your sister? You know, Pete, I should never press you for the money. Do me good now, and let me practice the helping hand (*taking a roll of bills from his purse*) There—let your sister go to the school, if she wants; and you wait around a few weeks. This'll pay your expenses, and, possibly, by that time, something'll turn up here. I'll look around myself, and try to help you to it.

PETE (*hesitating, then taking the bills and putting them into his own pocket-book*). You're very kind. (*Rising, going to the table and taking a pen and paper*) I'll give you a receipt.

BERT (*rising too*). Oh, no matter about that! I should prefer not. If you and I were to die your sister might have to pay it to my executors. No, no, we can remember it without a receipt.

PETE (*putting aside the pen, and rising from the table*). You're very kind, very. I hope, though, that you'll not think that I came in merely to see you because I knew that you had money. I came to see Hugh, because of *his* troubles.

BERT. His troubles? Hugh? What troubles has he?

PETE. He hasn't told you?

BERT. No. What do you mean?

PETE. You hadn't noticed anything about his manner?

BERT. Been a little glum, perhaps, the last few days; but what of that? You act as if you thought the thing was serious.

PETE. And so it is.

BERT. And he told you about it?

PETE. No—Why, everybody knows it—everybody in the town, I mean. The students—I suppose it hasn't reached them yet.

BERT. What is it? If everybody knows, I ought to know. What is it?

PETE. Why, about the professorship!

BERT. What professorship?

PETE. His father's.

BERT. Hugh's?

PETE. Yes.

BERT. Well, what of it?

PETE. You know it was endowed by a Mr. Mason, of New York. The principal was not paid in. He sent on the interest every year. Now he has failed. Of course, the salary will have to stop.

BERT. But the professorship must be continued?

PETE. Very doubtful! Wright has never been popular, you know, with old Prex; and now they say the old fox is going to seize the opportunity to get rid of him—divide up his work among other of the professors.

BERT. And there'll be nothing for the family—for Hugh and his sister—to live on?

PETE. How can there be, unless they get another place?

BERT. Why, this is dreadful, Pete, a dreadful situation! Strange that Hugh has never told me of it? I thought him my friend.

PETE. The very reason, perhaps, why he didn't tell you.

BERT. The reason? Is that your conception of friendship? What are friends for, unless you can tell them your troubles, and let them sympathize with you?

PETE. But he may have felt as I should. I was genuinely sorry when I came in here, and you began to talk about my troubles.

I felt ashamed of myself. You must remember that you have money; and there are mighty few self-respecting students who'll put themselves where others may suppose they are willing to be beggars.

BERT. Good God!—and you think such a thought as that would influence Hugh?

PETE. It's nothing but a guess of mine, of course.

(Knocking at the door at the Left Second.)

(BERT goes to the door and opens it.)

*Enter—Left Second—*MRS. VANWORTH, *in outdoor walking suit.*

BERT. Why, mother, what brought you to town today? I am so delighted to see you. *(Kissing her, then gesturing toward PETE)* This is Mr. Bennett, mother. *(MRS. VANWORTH and PETE bow. The latter moves toward the door. BERT continues)* No need of hurrying off, Pete! Must go?—Good by, then. *(Gives PETE his hand)* You'll let me hear from you—not so? And call upon me, if you need me?

*Exit—Left Second—*PETE.

MRS. VANWORTH *(who, meantime, has seated herself, as, presently, does BERT)*. Was not that the person that you told me was a stable-boy?

BERT. Yes; Pete Bennett.

MRS. VANWORTH. You seem to be quite intimate with him.

BERT. Oh, no! I merely keep in with him, as I do with all the fellows.

MRS. VANWORTH. It has been very difficult, Bertie, to teach you to select your acquaintances judiciously.

BERT. Well, there's Dick Carter and Tom Benson. They are in the fraternity that you got me into. I'll send for them, if you want company. Possibly they'll come.

MRS. VANWORTH. You know what I mean, Bertie. A rich man is like a tree in a southern climate—in danger of being over-climbed and over-reached, as people say, by parasites.

BERT. That'll take care of itself, mother. When I get into the world, people like Pete will avoid me as much as I care to avoid them.

MRS. VANWORTH. Is that all you know about the world, Bertie! I fear that you must learn a great deal before you are fitted for the position in which Providence seems to have put you.

BERT. I sometimes feel the same way, mother—as if I had been put into a deep, black hole; and the only thing to do was to try to climb up and out.

MRS. VANWORTH. What do you mean?

BERT. Oh, nothing, mother!—a little downhearted, perhaps! There's a shadow resting on me.

MRS. VANWORTH (*in evident anxiety*). What is it?

BERT. It seems Hugh's father has been living on a salary paid by a Mr. Mason, of New York. Mr. Mason has failed in business; and now, you see, the salary has failed.

MRS. VANWORTH. And Hugh has been asking you to pay it?

BERT. No; Hugh has said nothing to me about it.

MRS. VANWORTH. You ought to be thankful for that.

BERT. I'm not thankful for it. I'm sorry that he didn't have enough confidence in me to let me know of it.

MRS. VANWORTH. Why, he might have expected you to pay the salary yourself!

BERT. And I do expect to pay it myself.

MRS. VANWORTH. What a crazy notion! How much is it?

BERT. About three thousand dollars, I suppose.

MRS. VANWORTH. Three thousand dollars!—and you expect to pay that to every impecunious professor that comes along?

BERT. No; not to every one—only to one; and him the father of my best friend.

MRS. VANWORTH. And you think that you can spare that amount? Why, it's impossible.

BERT. Why so? We shall have plenty left.

MRS. VANWORTH. I'm very glad, Bertie, that, until you're of age, there'll be no such thing as your wasting that amount of money without my permission.

BERT. But you'll not refuse me?

MRS. VANWORTH. I must.

BERT. Why so?

MRS. VANWORTH. Chiefly, because we need the money for our own expenses.

BERT. Expenses, mother? How absurd! We have a great deal more than we can spend. In fact, we could endow the whole professorship for all time, principal and interest, from one year's income, and scarcely feel it.

MRS. VANWORTH. Is that all you know, Bertie? We can hardly get along on what we have now.

BERT. But there are a great many things that we don't need to have now.

MRS. VANWORTH. What, pray?

BERT. Why, for one thing, some of our horses and carriages, and, then, our opera box. You use it only about once a fortnight.

MRS. VANWORTH. Whether we use it or not is not the question, Bertie! There are certain things that one must have, if merely because he is in society.

BERT. We could get along, too, without so many clothes.

MRS. VANWORTH. Why, Bertie!

BERT. You and sister seem to think that you must have a new and different hat and gown about every time that you step out of the front door; and a single suit must cost anywhere from one to three hundred dollars.

MRS. VANWORTH. Oh, Bertie, you wouldn't have us going around so people could recognize us a block away, as they do a yellow dog—by the colors we always wear?

BERT. Well, if your set keeps on you'll have to go around that way before long. All the beasts and birds of the world will have been murdered. There will be none of their furs and feathers left. You will have to wear only your own, perhaps.

MRS. VANWORTH. You surprise me, Bertie!

BERT. Those who suppress their thoughts for fear of surprising others seldom speak the truth. See here, mother; if we all wore hair, for which clothing is a substitute, we should always look the same way—like the yellow dog.

MRS. VANWORTH. You want us to go back to that state—the savage state, then?

BERT. No; but to some sort of a natural state—if possible. The most beautiful thing in the world is the human face and form, the most attractive thing the human mind and soul. Your set paint the face and upholster the form till the whole personality comes at one from behind a mask. What sense is there in making life uninteresting? The most charming sight conceivable, I think, is a fresh, pretty girl in a clean, unadorned white gown.

MRS. VANWORTH. Where did you get such absurd conceptions, Bertie? You are mistaken in thinking your sister and I dress extravagantly. We might dress very plainly, and it would take all the money we have to run our four houses.

BERT. Why not shut up some of them, then?

MRS. VANWORTH. Houses deteriorate unless you keep them open.

BERT. Then why not get rid of some of them—sell them?

MRS. VANWORTH. What a question, Bertie? We *must* keep our house in New York, and go to the Highlands in Spring and Fall; and, merely to fulfil our obligations to society, we need our places at Newport and Lenox.

BERT. What obligations?

MRS. VANWORTH. Nobody would invite us to house-parties unless we had house-parties ourselves.

BERT. And what if not? We could get along without them. Why do we need them, or, at least, so many of them?

MRS. VANWORTH. If you want a very practical answer, Bertie, it's because your sister—and you yourself, for that matter—need to get married.

BERT. You think the kind of people that she meets at house-parties—or that I meet there—are the kind to marry?

MRS. VANWORTH. They are the only kind.

BERT. So far as I've known them, most of them are lazy, self-indulgent, purse-proud, mean. Why should I want to marry one of them?

MRS. VANWORTH. You will have to do it, Bertie. One of these days you'll need an establishment of your own. Then you'll be glad of some one who can help you.

BERT. It hardly seems right, mother, to think and to plan merely in order to spend money on ourselves—on all these houses, for instance, simply for three of us.

MRS. VANWORTH. The money's not spent on ourselves. Think of the servants we support. How many do you suppose that we have now in New York?

BERT. Oh, twenty, perhaps!

MRS. VANWORTH. Twenty-eight.

BERT. Twenty-eight people to take care of you and sister! Yet I doubt if you're any more comfortable than you would be in the Palace Hotel using only the servants of the house.

MRS. VANWORTH (*apparently struck by the absurdity of the remark*). Oh, Bertie!

BERT. At least you could lessen the number of your servants.

MRS. VANWORTH. But consider how large the house is! Just now, to tell the truth, I am thinking of enlarging the number. Mrs. Gorman is altogether too easy as a housekeeper.

BERT. You are not thinking of turning her off, are you?

MRS. VANWORTH. Oh, no! She's too valuable for that. I am merely thinking of getting a man to help her.

BERT. Been more trouble in the kitchen?

MRS. VANWORTH. There's always trouble there. You see the butler and the cook—

BERT. You keep that French cook yet?

MRS. VANWORTH. Of course!—not a better cook in the city!

BERT. Perhaps; but I should give up French cooking rather than run the risk every week of having a French revolution in my basement.

MRS. VANWORTH. Yes; but John—

BERT. John's our old family butler, absolutely honest and faithful.

MRS. VANWORTH. But the cook says he'll leave if John stays.

BERT. But John—why John *must* stay.

MRS. VANWORTH. Now you see the trouble you make?

BERT. I make? Oh, no, mother, you make it. (MRS. VANWORTH *evidently demurs*) Well, then, perhaps, both of us make it. We

do it by trying to run a boarding-house for a lot of half-worked people whose resources of thought or feeling are exhausted the moment hands and feet cease pumping in order to fill them. A lazy booby wags his tongue for the same reason that a lazy dog wags his tail; and he slashes indiscriminately what ever happens to be near. No wonder there are rows in the kitchen. What I fear is that, some day, the cook'll get mad enough to poison us all. MRS. VANWORTH (*rather apprehensively*). You really think there is danger of that?

BERT. Why not? Who knows where he came from, or what has been his history?

MRS. VANWORTH. What do you think we ought to do about it?

BERT. Just what I said—shut down on the number of houses, and of the servants in them.

MRS. VANWORTH. We are under obligations, as I said before, to society.

BERT. We are under more obligations, I think, to humanity.

MRS. VANWORTH. But society's a part of humanity.

BERT. It forms a larger part, I think, of inhumanity. When we follow society's lead, or become leaders in it, we tread a path, and set a pace, that may tumble half of those behind us down a precipice.

MRS. VANWORTH. If so, it is their own fault.

BERT. Yes and no. It's our fault so far as they are led astray by our example. Our deeds, mother, never end with ourselves. They include what we do to others.

MRS. VANWORTH. What others?

BERT. All others—persons or things; yes, all objects that surround us off to the remotest star. No one can think of himself except as the center of the universe with all of which he is connected as a soul with a body, and this with the atmosphere around the body. There is so much truth, at least, in what some call the exploded science of astrology.

MRS. VANWORTH. Where did you get such strange conceptions, Bertie. (*She rises, as does BERT.*)

Enter—Left Second—DAN and BEN. With the door open, and hearing what is said, they remain there a moment unobserved.

BERT (*to* MRS. VANWORTH). And you'll not sanction my giving the money for that professorship?

MRS. VANWORTH. Not by any means.

BERT. But I'm sure, mother, it would be the very best thing to do both for you and for me.

MRS. VANWORTH. Where was it that you hung that picture that I sent you last week?

BERT. In here. (*He leads the way to the Right.*)

Exeunt—Right Upper—BERT and MRS. VANWORTH, shutting the door after them.

DAN. Humph! Giving money for a professorship!

BEN. That ought to make the faculty put him into the honor group!

DAN. I should say so! Do you know, I think he's planning, too, to run for the Presidency of the Athletic Club.

BEN. No.

DAN. Yes. He has just given a thousand dollars for the deficit.

BEN. Who told you that? A rather cheeky bid, I should say.

DAN. Oh, he pretended not to want to have it known. "Money-bags" promised not to tell.

BEN. How did *you* find it out, then?

DAN. As everybody did, and as he must have known that everybody would—in the subscription book. "Money-bags" entered the sum between what he got from Jim Blake, who rooms on one side of him here, and Harry Brown, who rooms on the other side. We all know Hugh couldn't have given the money. The only other guess gives it to Bert. Besides that, Bert's been subsidizing Pete Bennett; and you know Pete has a good deal of influence.

BEN. And how did you find out about the subsidizing?

DAN. Pete went around this morning paying all his debts. He had just been in to see Bert. He said so. In fact, it was Pete that first suggested who gave the thousand dollars. He met "Money-bags" coming out of here, when he, himself, was coming in.

BEN. Dan, you were wrongly named. You ought to have been called Sherlock Holmes.

DAN. It's easy enough to see through things if only you keep your eyes open.

BEN. And your imagination at work. It's not always perception; imagination is the architect of most of our conclusions.

DAN. But the foundations are laid in fact.

BEN. Sometimes, yes.

DAN. You doubt what I say?

BEN. No; not what you say, but what you think, and I feel like giving Bert the benefit of the doubt. He may have had other motives.

Enter—Right Upper—BERT.

BERT (*to DAN and BEN*). Oh, good day, fellows. Any news?

DAN. I should think there was! Somebody has given a thousand dollars to make up the athletic deficit.

BERT. So? Well, it was needed bad enough!

DAN. Yes; and some of us think *he* must have needed it, too.

BERT. Who was that?

DAN. Why, the one who gave it.

BERT. What do you mean?—how so?

DAN. If a student gave that money, just as soon as the club finds out who he was he'll be made President; and that's not a slight honor, you know.

BERT. But everybody knows now who's going to be their next President.

DAN. Everybody except those who think it can be made doubtful.

BERT. Oh, nobody could think that.

DAN. Am glad to hear you say so. By the way, did you know that Pete Bennett's sister was going off to New York by the afternoon train?

BERT. What for?

DAN. To study for the stage; and do you know who's going with her?

BERT. Who's that?

DAN. Oh, one of your friends! I supposed you knew all about it.

BERT. Who do you mean?

DAN. Tom Benson. He's been flirting with her all the last month, you know.

BERT. You are using the word *know* pretty freely, I think. How should I know?

DAN. Tom's one of your friends—not so?

BEN. See here, Dan; if you continue to exercise your imagination much further, somebody may give you a punch that will land you in the land of imagination altogether.

DAN. I'm not exercising imagination. It was Pete, just after paying me a little debt, who told me that his sister was going. Then Tom Benson's chum told me Tom was going, too. When one puts two and two together, and draws an inference, he's exercising not imagination, but logic.

BERT. It applies to me, you think?

DAN. It applies to anybody, when a good many draw the same inference. Oh, very few will blame you, Bert! If I had a friend like that, I should, probably, think he was all right, and that I was all right playing into his hands. Hugh's not here?

BERT. No.

DAN. We must come in again, then. Good by.

BEN. Good by.

BERT. Good by.

Exeunt—Left Second—DAN and BEN.

BERT (*standing a moment, as if in perplexity, then turning toward the Right Upper*). Mother.

Enter—Right Upper—MRS. VANWORTH. BERT *continues, looking at his watch.* Mother, you can get ready to go home by the four o'clock train—not so?

MRS. VANWORTH. I was planning to take dinner with you and go back by the evening train. Why?

BERT. I've some business there that I've just thought of.

MRS. VANWORTH. What business?

BERT (*hesitating a moment, then going on*) You know I'm on the committee for getting advertisements for the college paper. If I'm in the city in the evening I can go down to the University Club and meet a lot of the Alumni, and, when there, they'll have more time for me, be better natured, and more apt to do what I want, than if I called on them at their offices. Besides, I've no lectures tomorrow, and can spend the whole forenoon in the city.

MRS. VANWORTH. If you really want to go at four o'clock I suppose there's no objection; but the train's not a very good one.

BERT. Has only one parlor car, I know. But I can arrange that, I think—will go out right away and telephone for seats. (*BERT opens the door at Left Second. As he does so, Enter—Left Second—IDA. BERT continues*) Oh, Miss Ida! (*She looks around the room*) No; your brother is not in; but he should be now in a minute or two. My mother, you see, is here. (*Gesturing toward Mrs. VANWORTH, who bows, as does also IDA*) Walk in. I'm glad you came. You can keep her company. I'm just going out to telephone for parlor car seats for her and me on the four o'clock train. (*To Mrs. VANWORTH*) Will be back in five minutes, mother.

Exit—Left Second—BERT.

IDA (*comes forward, and is rather coolly received by Mrs. VANWORTH, but, as if expected to say something, remarks*). Your son and my brother seem to be getting on very comfortably.

MRS. VANWORTH. Quite so, I think; though, of course, some of Mr. Wright's associates are not exactly what Bertie would prefer.

IDA. But he's not obliged to go with them. He belongs, you know, to a different fraternity.

MRS. VANWORTH. Yes; it was very fortunate that he had the good sense to choose his intimates from those more nearly in his own station—from students who could sympathize with his tastes and tendencies.

IDA. Yes, that's always very important!

MRS. VANWORTH. Much more important than even Bertie, I think, always recognizes. You will excuse me, Miss Wright, if I speak plainly with you. I think it's better, in the long run, to be perfectly frank; and it's not often, you know, that I get an opportunity to speak to you in private. I have a feeling that, in some quiet way, possibly through the help of your father, possibly through that of only your own good sense, you may be able to do

a very great service to our family—you may be able to influence your brother so that he may aid us in counteracting certain—well I can call them unfortunate—attitudes of mind that seem to be manifesting themselves in Bertie. They might be described as theories with reference to life, its methods, and its responsibilities, that are at variance, so to speak, with the position which his family occupies in New York, and, if he live, which he himself must occupy.

IDA. I'm sorry to hear you say that, Mrs. VanWorth; and I'm sure my brother will be. You think that he—

MRS. VANWORTH. Oh, your brother is not to blame, probably; not consciously, at least. It's quite natural that he and his companions—those in their sphere of life—should have such views. At the same time, I think it might be well if some one like yourself or your father—some one outside of his own sphere, as well as those of us inside of it, should caution him.

IDA. You've been frank with me, Mrs. VanWorth, and—you'll excuse me—will you not?—if I'm equally frank with you. What I want to say is that I think my brother understands the differences in station of which you are speaking—understands them already, and understands them a great deal better, I may say, than Mr. VanWorth does. You know Hugh has spent one or two vacations at your house in the city. When he comes back he always speaks of these differences.

MRS. VANWORTH (*evidently flattered*). He recognizes them, then?

IDA. Oh, yes! He always says that the young ladies that he meets there, and even the young men, wouldn't care anything about him if they really knew how poor—and he sometimes adds, but of course, that's only a joke—how pure—he really is.

MRS. VANWORTH (*evidently pleased*). Is that so? Is that so? I had hardly given him credit for having so much sense. You know that it's comparatively seldom that those in the under classes recognize, in so clear a way, that which is true of the upper classes.

IDA. Oh, now and then, they recognize a great deal more about them than is sometimes supposed!

MRS. VANWORTH. I am glad to hear you say so. You know that anyone coming from rural associations, such as you have here, into surroundings such as environ us, would feel very much out of place—very unhappy. Our friends, of course, couldn't be expected to welcome such a person; and, without a welcome, no one comes out well!—ha, ha!—We have always tried to be particularly kind to your brother for Bertie's sake; and yet you see—

IDA. Yes, I see.

MRS. VANWORTH. You're a very sensible young lady, Miss Wright; and—you'll excuse a mother, I trust, for saying it to you—it will really be a very great favor on your part, not only to our family, but, I think, to your brother, too, if—in a kindly spirit—you'll sug-

gest to him that he ought not—I don't mean in a general way, but in a particular way—to presume upon too great intimacy with Bertie, or, through him, with our family.

IDA. It's a pity, Mrs. VanWorth, that you hadn't thought of that when you first allowed your son to room with Hugh.

MRS. VANWORTH. Yes, but the place (*looking around*) was so attractive!

IDA. Just what a fly thinks of a spider's nest—not so?—Mrs. VanWorth?

MRS. VANWORTH. Oh, you mustn't be too hard upon your brother, Miss Wright. Neither he nor I could have surmised how Bertie would develop.

IDA. Some students will develop, Mrs. VanWorth. It's a fact, notwithstanding a number of things here that might prevent it, things, for instance, like your son's fraternity.

Enter—Left Second—BERT and HUGH.

MRS. VANWORTH (*bowing to HUGH and speaking to BERT*). Did you get the seats?

BERT. Yes; all right!

MRS. VANWORTH. I must go to the hotel, then, and pack up my grip—will drive to the station, and meet you there.

BERT. All right! (*MRS. VANWORTH bows to IDA and HUGH. BERT opens the door for her.*)

Exit—Left Second—MRS. VANWORTH.

BERT (*to IDA and HUGH*). I'm going to the city by the four o'clock train—must pack up. You'll excuse me.

Exit—Right Upper—BERT, shutting the door after him.

IDA (*to HUGH and looking toward the Left Second Entrance*). I'm glad you came in when you did. I feel relieved—am beginning to breathe freely once more.

HUGH. Has she been trying to sit down on you again?

IDA. Yes; and I never realized before how heavy a lot of money in one's pocket can make a person.

HUGH. A chance for you to do missionary work, then! Did you try to give her an uplift?

IDA. Missionary work! I felt like a butterfly in a bog trying to teach a worm to use wings. The more you get the worm to wiggling the deeper down it sinks.

HUGH. There's one blessed thing about it—for her. She never thinks of you as the butterfly or of herself as the worm, but *vice versa*.

IDA. Precisely. She was complaining of the humanizing effect upon Bert of his college life. I felt like explaining to her what effect she ought to expect from anybody's studying the humanities.

HUGH. Your explanation wouldn't have explained. To understand what is humanizing, people have to be human themselves. Some are not so. When you try to train them, they are like dogs. You ask them to lend you a hand, and they can only scratch with a paw. (*Knocking is heard at the door at the Left Second*) Come in.

*Enter—Left Second—*PETE BENNETT, *evidently in a state of great nervous excitement.*

PETE (*to HUGH, hardly bowing to IDA*). Is Bert in?

HUGH. Yes.

PETE (*looking around*). Where is he?

HUGH (*glancing toward the door at right upper*). In his room. (*To BERT*) Bert!

PETE. Is he going to New York this afternoon?

HUGH. I believe so—is packing now, I think.

PETE. It's true, then—confounded skunk! (*To IDA*) Excuse me; but when you talk about some people you have to use words to fit them.

*Enter—Right Upper—*BERT. (*PETE continues*) I understand you're going to New York by the four o'clock train this afternoon.

BERT. Yes.

PETE. I want you to know that there's no necessity for your going now. I've checkmated your little game.

BERT. I was going with my mother.

PETE. Yes, so you say. You say a good many things of the same kind. A sneak, like a snake, never moves straight forward. If you think it going in one direction, it can prove by its wiggling that it's going in another. It gets on all the same, though.

BERT (*rather sharply*) What do you mean?

PETE. I mean to say that you've been found out. You know, or ought to know, that Tom Benson is the last man that any one would have go to the city with his sister. But look! She gets the money to go from you, you give the tip to Tom; and then, to recommend him, go along with him yourself. Now I want to tell you that she's not going; moreover, besides that, that you and your money may go to hell where it'll be better able to do your kind of work. Here it is—all that I haven't spent. (*Puts some bills on the table*) If you want to sue me for the rest, do so; and I shall have the pleasure of telling the court exactly what kind of a scoundrel you are. (*Pete snatches the tongs from the fireplace,*

and waves them as if about to attack BERT. IDA rushes in front of PETE and HUGH takes the tongs from his hands.)

HUGH. Wait, wait, Pete! You are forgetting yourself.

PETE. You are not—because there are some things you've not begun yet to learn. I know what I'm talking about. He's been trying to hit several geese with one stone—get my sister to New York, play into the hands of Tom Benson, and get me to run him for the presidency of the Athletic Club!

BERT. Where in heaven—or hell—did you get hold of those ideas, Pete?

PETE. Where everybody in college has got hold of them, if you want to know the truth. What did you give that thousand dollars this morning to the Athletic Club for? What did you want your mother to let you give money to the college for? What did you put me in a hole for, where everybody in college thinks I'm a man to be bribed?

HUGH (*to PETE*). You blaggardy fool, don't you talk that way in my room! Here, Bert, take him by the other shoulder. We'll pitch him out.

BERT. Wait a minute, Hugh! I want to hear what he has to say. Who do you suppose told him those things?

PETE. I'll tell you—everybody who knows anything about the facts. You thought that you could let it leak out where the money came from without having anything leak out about your motives. The two things, unfortunately, have gone together.

IDA. I beg your pardon, Pete. But you're mistaken here from beginning to end. It is his mother with whom he is going to the city, I was here myself, and heard them arrange to go.

PETE. Excuse me, too, Miss Ida. You don't understand a millionaire nor the mother of a millionaire. Tom Benson, of all the fellows in college, is Mrs. VanWorth's ideal. It was because he was in that rotten fraternity, that she got her son to join it. The women in her set are just as bad as the men. For them all the world is a playground and all the men and women in it only playthings. One fact that they think they know with certainty is this—that the more poor girls they can get a son of theirs to fall in love with, the more likely they are to get him to marry a rich girl that he's not in love with. Oh, you can't fool me! Wherever people prize things mainly for the gilding you may be sure that whatever is under it would look mighty cheap if it were not covered up.

HUGH. What you say may be true enough about certain people, Pete, but it's not true about Bert. You've been misinformed. I know what I'm talking about. Come out in the hall here. I want to tell you something.

Exeunt—Left Second—HUGH and PETE reluctantly following HUGH.

IDA. Thank God, we're rid of him for a little!

BERT. Yes, you and Hugh are, but—should you think that any one in college could really believe what he said about me? He seemed to believe it—thoroughly.

IDA. A man who's very poor, as he is, sometimes becomes very sensitive, you know—morbidly so. Besides this, some one, evidently, has been—well one might almost say making a malicious use of that trait in him.

BERT. But that would be so mean—in the circumstances.

IDA. Yes, but somebody has been mean.

BERT. What do you suppose was the motive?

IDA. I don't know much about it; but I should guess college politics.

BERT. I never ran for any office yet; nor tried to do it.

IDA. Perhaps some of them are afraid that you will try it in the future—and it looks as if they thought you might be successful.

BERT. Miss Ida, when he lifted those tongs at me, I really thought for a moment that I was a goner. I might have been—he's a very strong fellow, you know—if it hadn't been for you. I wish that I could always have you to stand by me, or in front of me. If so, I'm sure that I should be less likely ever to be a goner in the future. (*He takes her by the hand. She withdraws it and moves away.*)

IDA. No, please, Bert. I had a talk, this afternoon, with your mother.

BERT. Well?

IDA. Do you think that I would do anything to separate you from your own family?—your mother, your sister, and all your friends?

BERT. Separate? How so?

IDA. I think that you must know what I mean.

BERT. We are living in America, not Europe.

IDA. People who try to imitate foreign ways sometimes succeed in forgetting their own.

BERT. You like me, do you not?

IDA. Yes, I do. I always have, and always shall, I think. But a person who stands on a precipice, and sees a sunny land below, must learn not to try to get to it, in case there be too much risk of a plunge and a fall.

BERT. Do you apply that to yourself?

IDA. Yes, and to you.

BERT. You are right. You are on the height, and I am in the valley. I wonder if my father, when he left me so much money, ever imagined how heavy I might find it—if I ever wanted to climb upward. I wonder if my mother imagines how she's trying to add to the weight, when she's advising me to marry more money. Miss Ida, it's hard to live in a world where one was meant to go with others and to find himself obliged to live alone—his purest mo-

tives misrepresented, his kindest deeds misunderstood, the members of his own family his worst enemies, and everyone to whom he feels that he should most like to look for an exchange of sympathy so situated as to think that it can't and shouldn't be given; and all this because he's the son of a millionaire.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

As a Senior in College.

SCENE: *The same as in Act III, the time about a year later than in that. The rising curtain reveals MRS. VANWORTH seated on one side of the table, and DOCTOR seated on its other side. As usual, she wears an outdoor walking suit. The DOCTOR's hat is on the table.*

DOCTOR. It's a very serious matter for a man in my position to interfere in a case of this kind.

MRS. VANWORTH. But you understand, Doctor, we are in a situation in which we can afford to make it worth your while.

DOCTOR. In one sense, yes; in another sense, no. It's never worth while for a business man to allow himself to risk being put out of his business. It's the business of a scientist, like myself, to look into facts. He would soon be put out of it if he were discovered overlooking them.

MRS. VANWORTH. But we should ask from you nothing of that sort. All we want is a little expert testimony with reference to what nobody can deny—the abnormal development in Bert of these eccentric tendencies.

DOCTOR. I'm willing to admit the eccentricity, of course. Nothing could be more eccentric than for the ordinary millionaire to give away money. But this is hardly enough to prove insanity. He pretends to have reasons for his action. Some of them, I must confess, appear even to me to be good and practical. At least they fail to afford any proof that his mind has given way. Until I get that proof it's impossible for me to sign a certificate saying that I have it.

MRS. VANWORTH. And without the certificate impossible to get him into an asylum?

DOCTOR. Yes.

MRS. VANWORTH. We might get the certificate from some one else. But you are our family physician. In time, I think, they are sure to consult you.

DOCTOR. There's danger of it, yes.

MRS. VANWORTH. But we *must* stop Bert in some way. Think what his action means for myself and my daughter.

DOCTOR. He has not touched your money or her money, has he?

MRS. VANWORTH. No; how could he?

DOCTOR. Only that of which he himself, having attained the legal age, has come into possession?

MRS. VANWORTH. Certainly.

DOCTOR. He's not using anything of yours, then? He's not harming you?

MRS. VANWORTH. Why, Doctor, how you talk! He's doing his best, apparently, to make me the mother, and his sister the sister, of a poor man! He never can live in the same style in which we live—not even associate with us on terms of equality.

DOCTOR. I understand that he's not intending to give away everything.

MRS. VANWORTH. No; but almost everything. He has already deeded away one of our large country houses—one of which, too, my daughter and myself were both very fond. Now, if we wanted to go there, we shouldn't have a right to even a roof over our heads.

DOCTOR. I appreciate your feelings, Mrs. VanWorth; yet it hardly warrants you—does it?—in arresting him, and keeping him in confinement?

MRS. VANWORTH. Oh, you know, we should do him no harm! He would have every comfort, and we should only detain him long enough to teach him a little sense—till he was old enough to be reasonable.

DOCTOR. Do you think it would be justifiable, Mrs. VanWorth, to shadow his future influence by letting everybody know that his own family once thought him incompetent, if not an imbecile?

MRS. VANWORTH (*rising impatiently and wringing her hands*). But we *must* do something. If you'll not help us we must look elsewhere. I am greatly disappointed in you, Doctor.

DOCTOR (*rising*). I dislike to disappoint any one, Mrs. VanWorth. But—you will excuse me for saying it—I do it for your own good. When you look elsewhere, you are likely to be disappointed there, too, unless the one you consult is a scoundrel; and the less you have to do with scoundrels the better.

MRS. VANWORTH (*straightening up*). You are frank, Doctor Cator.

DOCTOR. I am. I'm an old friend of the family; and never more of a friend than just at this crisis. You're at core a sensible woman, Mrs. VanWorth; and I'm very sure that, after you've given a little serious thought to the subject, you'll change your mind with reference both to the matter itself and to my attitude regarding it.

MRS. VANWORTH. What am I to do, then?

DOCTOR. Exactly what all the rest of us have to do when things go against us—make the best of the situation, notwithstanding a temptation—as in your case, Mrs. VanWorth—to make the worst of it.

Enter—Left Second—BERT.

BERT (*whose manner has become, to a marked degree, more light-hearted and enthusiastic than hitherto*). Good morning, mother (*to MRS. VANWORTH*). Good morning, Doctor (*to the DOCTOR*). Have you told mother what I said to you yesterday? Perhaps she'll understand it better coming from you. You know she's never been through college, and studied foreign languages—I mean, now, languages foreign to the lingo of her own little and exclusive set. (*To MRS. VANWORTH*) Oh, yes, it is little, mother, in more ways than one. (*To the DOCTOR*) I *have* been through college; and I know just how foreign people—I mean people foreign to our little ways of living—look upon the son of a millionaire—just how much they open their hearts to him, and let him share their sympathies. As a rule, whether enemies or friends, they don't want him to share anything in that direction. They want all the shares themselves. Your millionaire is like a drop cast up from the sea on a sunny day, reflecting all the colors of the rainbow—(*to MRS. VANWORTH*) so you think, mother, and, to an extent, your thought is true. But besides this, there is something else that's also true. The drop is usually dashed high up onto a cliff, where it stays and expires alone and useless. Meantime the great ocean of humanity, to live and work in which and with which, and for which, is all that makes life to other men really worth the living, moves on to accomplish its destiny without probably one serious contribution from himself. (*To the DOCTOR*) Do you know, I've just got the report from the Sound place. The parlor, library, and dining-room are exactly what we need for school-rooms and refectory; and almost all the bedrooms can be cut up into three or four small ones; and, with the servants' quarters, the accommodations will be perfect.

DOCTOR. Which was it that you were planning to use that for?

BERT. Why, I told you—for that Junior Republic. The farm contains over five hundred acres, you know. Besides that, I've endowed it with about a quarter of a million—some of the best securities that I have.

A knocking at the door. BERT opens it.

Enter—Left Second—HUGH and IDA.

BERT. Why, good day, Miss Ida—glad to see you in the room once more. (*To his MOTHER and the DOCTOR*) Mother, Doctor.

(*IDA, HUGH, the DOCTOR and MRS. VANWORTH exchange bows, the latter with apparent stiffness, the DOCTOR only rising.*)

BERT (*to HUGH*). Back from vacation, I suppose? The law school seems to have agreed with you.

HUGH. Perhaps I have had an easier life—haven't had to take care of a chum. (*Looking around*) Roomed alone the whole year?

BERT. Yes; the room couldn't go back on its record. No Freshman son of a millionaire put in an appearance, so I had to scrape on as best I could alone. (*A college chorus is heard from the outside*) Hello!—a serenade, eh? I think I recognize the crowd! (*Knocking at the Left Second. BERT opens the door. DAN, BEN, PETE and others march in, single file, singing. When they see MRS. VANWORTH and the DOCTOR they suddenly stop*) Don't stop! Keep on! Everybody here wants to hear you! Glad to see you all; but finish your serenade first. (*The singers sing through their chorus*) How are you? All glad to get back—not so? (*Introducing the strangers*) This is my mother and Doctor Cator. Mr. Wylie, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Strong, Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones, graduates of last year! (*All, including HUGH and IDA, exchange greetings. The DOCTOR gives IDA a chair, and both sit. DAN apparently talks to IDA.*)

BEN (*to BERT*). I want to congratulate you, Bert.

BERT. Upon what?

BEN. Why, on being class-orator. It's the biggest honor the class gives, isn't it?

BERT. I believe so—rather foolish to run me! I never sought for any office, you know.

BEN. The very reason why the office sought you, perhaps! They say there was no one to run against you.

HUGH. They hadn't forgotten his own refusing to run against anybody for the athletic presidency, last year.

BERT. That was a case of being cornered, and choosing the only possible way out. To get honor for myself I was supposed to be getting dishonor for my supporters—to be trying to get ballots through bribery.

HUGH. But very few thought that, Bert.

BERT. A very few things when they burn can make smoke; and very little smoke can dim everybody's outlook.

BEN. You are going to accept this office, though?

BERT. Yes, I can now. I'm no longer a millionaire—more nearly on an equality with the rest of the fellows.

BEN. What do you mean?

DOCTOR. Why, he's given his property away.

PETE. Given everything away?

BERT. Oh, no; not everything! Not such a fool as that! Not such a sponge, either! To live at the expense of the public in an almshouse makes a man as much of a public nuisance as to live in the same way in a palace.

DOCTOR. How are you going to preserve the balance, Bert, between the two extremes?

BERT. Precisely as I preserve every balance of the kind,—by using my judgment.

DOCTOR. But, in this case, the judgment involves what seems rather complicated. You are not choosing between poverty—or, say, socialism—on the one side, and wealth—or say aristocracy—on the other side. You are trying to take a little from both sides.

BERT. Yes; because both sides are made up of parts, and I don't think my judgment will have done its perfect work until it has tried to distinguish between some, at least, of these parts. There are arguments, as we all know, in favor of getting things at wholesale as well as at retail—or in detail, as one might say; but, for practical purposes, a good deal of what one gets at wholesale is of no use. I am perfectly aware that most minds lump things; but the more rational a mind is the more it discriminates, and so discards what is of no use. I try to be rational; so, on the one hand, I'm not a socialist; because I believe in personal responsibility. I think a man has a right to certain possessions, a right to a certain amount of wealth, a right to save, by himself and for himself, what, by and by, when unable to work, will support himself and his family. But, on the other hand, I'm not an aristocrat; because I believe in responsibility for others. I think no man has a right to excessive wealth, to put into his own coffers what is needed for the support of his fellowmen and their families. Hoarding up money beyond what one can use is like hoarding up fruit of the same kind. It tends to rot. It makes the individual self-centered, inconsiderate, mean, immoral. It makes the community lose faith in republican institutions, and fail to practice that love of humanity which underlies them.

PETE. Oh, you're going in with our classmates, Bob Martin and Jack Sharp, eh?

BERT. How so?

PETE. Why, they are millionaires.

BERT. And what have they done?

PETE. Why, you know! Bob has written a play, and Jack a novel, both of them intended to show up the profligate lives of pleasure led by the millionaires.

BERT. I haven't read their effusions. Are they interesting?

PETE. Well, rather!

BERT. I should think they would be. Accounts of profligacy usually are.

PETE. But these, you know, are founded on facts.

BERT. On all the facts? Anything less than all the truth, you know, is never the whole truth. As a fact, most millionaires that I know are not profligate. If they were, or had been for any length of time, they wouldn't be millionaires. Nor are their pleasures profligate. If they were, or had been for any length of time, they wouldn't be pleasures.

PETE. Then you don't think there's corruption underneath the surface of millionaires' society?

BERT. Plenty of it. But I'm not sure that you can correct it by directing attention to the surface. I infer, from what you say, that these writings make this appear rather attractive.

PETE. That's true enough.

BERT. How many people, do you suppose, look beneath the surface of anything? I am inclined to believe that most men would start out to walk over the quicksands of the bottomless pit if only the sun should happen to strike the surface so as to make it seem, for the time being, a little bright.

PETE. Then you don't approve of writing about the evils of society?

BERT. It all depends on how it's done. I don't believe in writing about evils and, at the same time, not trying to right them.

PETE. But Dick and Jack say that's what they are trying to do.

BERT. They could do it much more effectively.

PETE. How?

BERT. If they think that it's the millionaires that cause society to be corrupt it's their first duty to cease to be millionaires.

(DAN, BEN and PETE look incredulous. The DOCTOR makes a movement of the shoulders, as if to say, "That's what I told you.")

PETE. How could they?

BERT. Until our Government, actuated by the motive of self-preservation, makes hereditary aristocracy obtained through wealth impossible, and democracy inevitable, by a law limiting—not acquisition doing which would paralyze progress by preventing enterprise, but limiting—inheritance to something, say, not more than one million, the heirs of these millionaires should show their patriotism, as well as philanthropy by voluntarily surrendering their unneeded surplus.

MRS. VANWORTH (*to the DOCTOR as she rises*). Doctor, I am not feeling well.

(BERT goes to her side, as does the DOCTOR. DAN, BEN, PETE and the other students, as if thinking themselves in the way, after exchanging bows with the rest in the room, move toward the Left Second Entrance.)

Exeunt—Left Second—DAN, PETE, BEN and other students.

(BERT accompanies his mother to the Left Second Entrance. She gestures to him that she does not need his services.)

Exeunt—Left Second—DR. CATOR and MRS. VANWORTH.

(HUGH and IDA come toward the Left Second Entrance as if to leave.)

BERT. Don't go, please. She says she doesn't need me. Only a feint on her part, I think, to get away!

HUGH. I'm glad to see you a moment alone, Bert. I understand that you have endowed my father's professorship?

BERT. Yes; I couldn't find a better cause, could I?

HUGH. It's impossible for me to tell you how thankful I am.

IDA. And I, too.

BERT. Wait here a minute, please, I've something now to tell *you*. Some months ago, before my saving box began to leak, I myself applied for a professorship here.

HUGH. And promised to endow it?

BERT. Now, Hugh—even you? It's the last time, I trust, that anyone will ask such a question of me. No; I didn't promise to endow it; but I was not so sensitive about their being influenced by that hope as not to exercise common sense—more, I think, than Doctor Cator or my esteemed mother would willingly accord me. I argued this way: that if they imagined that I would endow it, I couldn't prevent their exercising their own imagination. I could, however, do this thing. I could withhold promises, and make the only ground for their expectation what they knew of my character in general. If, in judging of it, they chose to lump my character and my wealth together, that was not my fault but my father's; and I should leave them welcome to do it. Well, they have given me the professorship—as nearly as I could get anything—on my own merits. The arrangement is that I shall spend two years studying in Europe, before I come back to take it. Of course, I foot the bills.

HUGH. Just the thing for you, Bert; just the thing! I congratulate you most heartily.

IDA. And I, too.

BERT. Wait a minute, Miss Ida. Hugh can listen, if he chooses. I think he knows my sentiments on this subject already. Let me ask you, honestly now, young lady, wouldn't you like to continue living on here in your own old college town?

IDA. No sense in my trying to deny that!

BERT. And wouldn't you like to spend two years in Europe before settling down here?

IDA. Why—

BERT (*taking her to his arms*). Yes, I know you would. (*To HUGH*) Hugh, you have heard me complain a good deal about the situation in life allotted me. I've been thinking, lately, that success may not depend upon situations as much as on ourselves; not upon conditions as much as on the way in which we meet and master them. If we ourselves manage them as we should it's possible to find a blessing as well as a bane in being born the son of a millionaire.

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